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| Report to       | <b>Policy &amp; Programme Committee</b>                |
| Date            | <b>28 February 2017</b>                                |
| By              | <b>Director of Countryside Policy &amp; Management</b> |
| Title of Report | <b>Green Infrastructure Framework (GIF)</b>            |

**Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:-**

- 1) Note the current draft of the GIF attached as appendix 1 & 2 to this report and comment on the proposed amendments to be made to the framework prior to consultation as set out at paragraph 2.2 of this report**
- 2) Note the proposed consultation to be undertaken with Local Authority Partners on the GIF in May /June 2017**
- 3) Note that the GIF will be presented to the P&P committee post consultation for recommendation to the NPA for formal approval**

**1. Summary and Background**

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Guidance<sup>1</sup> defines Green Infrastructure (GI) as follows;  
‘Green infrastructure provides multiple benefits, notably ecosystem services, at a range of scales, derived from natural systems and processes, for the individual, for society, the economy and the environment. To ensure that these benefits are delivered, green infrastructure must be well planned, designed and maintained. Green infrastructure should, therefore, be a key consideration in both local plans and planning decisions where relevant.’
- 1.2 The South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework will form part of the evidence base for the SDNP Local Plan and will demonstrate the Duty to Cooperate requirements created by the Localism Act 2011. Work on the Framework commenced in 2015 following completion of an earlier pilot study during 2014. The key message in terms of the Duty to Cooperate is that the South Downs National Park forms the green heart of the sub-region. The National Park is unable to meet its objectively assessed need for housing without harming its nationally protected landscape. It does, however, provide the green infrastructure heart for the growing community of the sub-region.
- 1.3 The South Downs GIF is due to be circulated for formal consultation with the partner authorities in May 2017 following some reworking of the draft document. This report is to inform Members about the current progress with the Framework document, to invite comment on the suggested amendments and to note the formal consultation process.

**2. Development of the Framework**

- 2.1 The South Downs GIF (**Appendix 1 & 2**) has been developed to support the delivery of strategic GI in and around the South Downs National Park. It aims to:-  
‘Create, protect and enhance a connected network of multifunctional assets; which sustainably meet the needs of local communities and supports the special qualities of the South Downs; by achieving a consensus about the strategic principles for planning, delivery and management of green infrastructure’

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment#para027>

The Framework covers all of the District Authorities which adjoin or have an area within the SDNP. This provides a buffer around the entire National Park enabling cross-boundary issues to be captured and a sub-regional approach to GI to be followed by the partnership.

- 2.2 The South Downs GI Framework was developed during 2015 -2016 during which time support from all partner authorities was secured for this approach (with the exception of West Sussex County Council and Winchester City Council). (Letter from The Director of Planning attached as **Appendix 4**) During this time the work was led by the Sustainability Policy Officer who left the SDNP in March 2016. The framework had been redrafted following informal consultation at officer level with the framework partner authorities. Since that time work on the framework has been on hold.
- 2.3 However, a GI Framework which has been approved by the SDNPA and endorsed by partners is an essential supporting document for the SDNP Local Plan, and it is time therefore to update the base GI Framework which had been previously prepared to a draft stage. This updating will include the following principles to ensure partners are fully supportive and a GI framework for the SDNP is adopted;
- Other studies which form part of the evidence base for the local plan have since been completed and can now be considered as part of the Framework evidence – e.g. Ecoserv, which was in it's infancy during the evidence gathering phase of the GI framework process and is now capable of producing more detailed evidence to inform the Framework and its findings.
  - Renewed emphasis on the economic value of GI in terms of natural capital<sup>2</sup> and the economic impacts on health and wellbeing.
  - Emphasis of the story behind the Green Infrastructure Investment Areas (GIIA) and their relevance and importance to the region. The GIAs are the areas which have emerged from analysis of the study area which are 'hotspots' for Green Infrastructure interventions.
  - Duplication - The 'framework document' and the 'evidence report' could be trimmed to avoid duplication between the two documents, and wording tightened.
  - Integration of the study with the SDNP Infrastructure Business Plan & the SDNP Climate Change Adaptation Plan. This would be a high level comparison of the GIAs and identified delivery plans seeking to ensure that the documents all relate to each other.
  - Identification of aspirational/statement GI features – e.g. retrofitting green bridges at key points over the M3 and A27 to provide significant improvements to connectivity for wildlife and people and as signature projects for the SDNP.
- 2.4 The Framework Document will be reworked to incorporate these areas of focus and will be considered at the Framework Partnership meeting in April 2017 prior to formal consultation in May/June 2017. -

### 3. Policy Background

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to 'set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure' (Para 114)<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.2 The Duty to Co-operate created by the Localism Act 2011 places a legal duty on a range of authorities to engage constructively, effectively and on an ongoing basis on strategic cross-boundary issues. The duty recognises that climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity and ecological networks and flood risk management are better planned at a strategic scale. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/duty-to-cooperate>
- 3.3 The National Parks Vision and Circular (2010) recognises that national parks provide some of the best-quality green infrastructure, which acts as one of the life-support systems for our

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• <sup>2</sup> defined as the world's stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things. It is from this Natural Capital that humans derive a wide range of services, often called ecosystem services, which make human life possible.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/natural-capital-committee>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

towns, cities and rural areas. This helps create a healthy environment for communities and businesses, improving air and water quality and the health and well-being of the population.

3.4 The South Downs Partnership Management Plan, identifies Green Infrastructure as of central importance in delivery of ecosystem services

3.5 The SDNP Climate Change Adaptation Plan refers to the importance of Green Infrastructure in addressing a range of ecosystem services impacts as part of the parkwide action plan.

3.6 The SDNP Local Plan includes a strategic policy for Green Infrastructure (SD14) and references the Green Infrastructure Framework. The Local Plan recognises green infrastructure as one of the six strategic cross boundary issues for the National Park.

#### 4. Next Steps

4.1 The revised Green Infrastructure Framework will be launched at a Duty to Cooperate meeting in July with all partners asked to endorse it.

4.2 There is potential to develop a Natural Capital balance sheet for the Framework area. This would extend beyond the SDNP boundaries & support NC on a sub-regional level and would support the forthcoming DEFRA 25 year Plan.

4.3 A GI Partnership list, as attached as **Appendix 3**, has been instrumental in developing the GIF to date and is ready to help shape the GIF moving forward. Discussions will take place to ensure that this group is properly representative for this area. Sussex Local Nature Partnership has expressed interest in joining the partnership. Surrey Nature Partnership, Coast to Capital LEP & Enterprise M3 LEP would also be valuable partners and will be approached.

4.4 The framework sets out the development of Green Infrastructure Investment Areas (GIIA) which have emerged from the assessment and evaluation of evidence from the study area where the coalescence of a number of issues indicated the need for more targeted strategic and cross cutting interventions. Further development of more detailed delivery plans and local partnerships is needed for these GIAs and it is proposed to develop these detailed action plans as part of the Green Infrastructure section of the Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy.

#### 5. Other Implications

| Implication   | Yes*/No   |
|---|---|
| Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?   | The GIF will come back to relevant P&P and SDNPA for comments and approval in due course  |
| Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?  | Other than staff time to rework the framework document and run the consultation process, there are no resource implications. The future delivery/action plan will be developed as part of the wider Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy and will also require staff time. |
| How does the proposal represent Value for Money?  | The Framework is part of the Local Plan evidence base and also delivers the Duty to Cooperate requirement for the SDNP and other authorities. It supports the integration of an ecosystem approach within the planning and operations directorates.                       |
| Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?  | Not applicable  |
| Has due regard been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010? | The Framework considers a range of accessibility issues and inhibiting factors for access to natural greenspace for communities within the study area.  |
| Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?  | Not applicable  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?  | Not applicable   |
| Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?   | Not applicable   |
| <p>Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Living within environmental limits</li> <li>2. Ensuring a strong healthy and just society</li> <li>3. Achieving a sustainable economy</li> <li>4. Promoting good governance</li> <li>5. Using sound science responsibly</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Living within environmental limits - The project is about identifying where there is a need to address ecosystem services and green infrastructure shortfalls across the study area and is about living within environmental limits through supporting ecosystem services</li> <li>2. Ensuring a strong healthy and just society - Ecosystem services and GI impact significantly on society, health and well being and improving quality of life is a major driver for GI.</li> <li>3. Achieving a sustainable economy - The economic benefits of ecosystem services and GI are widely recognised to many sectors of the economy --- example – pollination services</li> <li>4. Promoting good governance - Planning GI at a regional level promotes partnership working and a wider sphere of influence than would otherwise be achieved for all parties.</li> <li>5. Using sound science responsibly The study uses the available evidence from a range of sources, the report seeks to update some of these evidence sources.</li> </ol> |

## 6. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

| Risk   | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigation   |
|--|------------|--------|--|
| Framework misses the Local Plan timetable for completion by September 2017 | low        | high   | Ensure timetable for completion for end of August is met |

## ANDREW LEE

### DIRECTOR OF COUNTRYSIDE POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

#### South Downs National Park Authority

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#### Appendices

1. South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework Technical Report (March 2016)
2. South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework Evidence Report (March 2016)
3. List of Framework member organisations
4. Letter to potential partners from the Director of Planning;

#### SDNPA Consultees

Director of Planning; Countryside & Policy Managers. Strategy Leads and Landscape & Bio-diversity Leads, Monitoring Officer, Planning Policy, Major Projects Team. .

External Consultees See Appendix 3

#### Background Documents

[English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government vision and circular 2010](#)  
[Partnership Management Plan](#)  
[Climate Change Adaptation Plan](#)  
[South Downs Local Plan: Preferred Options](#)  
[Natural Capital Committee's fourth state of natural capital report](#)

**Appendix III                      South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework**

**South Downs GI Framework Organisation List 14/02/2017**

1. Woodland Trust
2. RSPB
3. National Trust
4. British Horse Society
5. South Downs Local Access Forum
6. High Weald
7. English Heritage
8. Sussex Community Development Association
9. Buriton Parish
10. Forestry Commission
11. Environment Agency
12. Arun & Rother Rivers Trust
13. Test and Itchen Catchment
14. ESCC GIWG
15. Natural England
16. Hampshire WT
17. Sussex WT
18. Mid Sussex DC
19. Wealden DC
20. Waverley DC
21. Horsham BC
22. Lewes DC
23. Chichester DC
24. Eastbourne DC
25. Havant BC
26. Fareham BC
27. Gosport BC
28. Eastleigh BC
29. Basingstoke and Deane DC
30. Arun DC
31. Adur and Worthing BC
32. Portsmouth CC
33. Southampton CC
34. Hart DC
35. Brighton and Hove CC
36. Test Valley DC
37. Winchester CC
38. East Hants DC
39. West Sussex County Council
40. Hampshire County Council
41. East Sussex County Council





18 September 2015

**Subject: South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework**

This letter explains the work being undertaken by the South Downs National Park Authority and partner authorities to develop a South Downs Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework and seeks support for both the principle of a Framework and the milestones for achieving it.

The case for a South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework emerged from public consultation in February 2014 on options for the South Downs Local Plan and your officers' advice following a GI workshop on October 14th. Overwhelming endorsement was received for a Local Plan GI policy that would be supported and informed by a GI Strategy setting out the approach to the provision of GI in and around the National Park in accordance with paragraph 114 of the NPPF. From further dialogue with partners, the consensus has been to develop a Framework rather than a strategy, the rationale being that a Framework more aptly describes the need to link with and build upon existing initiatives and strategies rather than risk duplication.

The Framework is as much aimed at delivery of GI outside of the South Downs National Park as it is about delivering it in the National Park. The focus is strategic delivery of GI across local authority boundaries, attracting the scale of funding that can only be achieved through partnership working.

The draft aim and objectives for the Framework were discussed, as advised at a workshop: *Planning to Deliver Multi-functional Benefits for the SDNP and Beyond* held at the South Downs Centre on 13 October 2014 and at a Duty to Co-operate event held in July 2015. The aims and objectives have since been refined via a Technical Working Group and are included in Enclosure 1 that provides further details of the proposed document and process toward adoption.

I would like to secure your feedback and support to the following programme for review and adoption of the Framework.

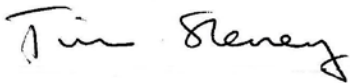
|         |      |   |
|---------|------|---|
| Nov     | 2015 | Draft GI Framework to be circulated for officer review by partner authorities / stakeholder bodies; |
| Jan     | 2016 | Updating of GI Framework to address officer comments;   |
| Feb/Mar | 2016 | Formal Consultation on Revised Draft Framework by partner authorities / stakeholder bodies;         |

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Arp/May 2016 | Further updating of GI Framework to respond to formal Consultation;                             |
| Summer 2016  | Final Framework Agreement circulated for signature by partner authorities / stakeholder bodies. |

The GI Framework is an exciting opportunity to really add value at no cost to yourselves, and be in a good position to attract funds for GI. The Framework will offer opportunities to collaborate on evidence collection in support of the planning function and the potential to partner on major funding bids that support GI delivery across the Framework area.

I very much welcome your support for this initiative.

Yours



Tim Slaney  
**Director of Planning**

Enclosure I: South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework: Further Details.

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Enclosure I to SDNPA Letter  
entitled 'South Downs Green  
Infrastructure Framework'  
dated 18 Sep 15.

## **South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework**

### **What is it?**

The South Downs Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework is being developed to support the delivery of strategic GI across the administrative boundaries of local authorities in and around the South Downs National Park. The aim and objectives set out below provide a clearer picture of what the Framework sets out to achieve.

### **Aim**

*To create, protect and enhance a connected network of multifunctional assets; which sustainably meet the needs of local communities and supports the special qualities of the South Downs; by achieving a consensus about the strategic principles for planning, delivery and management of green infrastructure.*

### **Objectives**

- *Use GI Assets to support health and well-being of people and businesses in the Framework area;*
- *Demonstrate and deliver economic benefits through GI;*
- *Protect and enhance biodiversity and improve habitat connectivity to maintain and improve the health of the environment;*
- *Protect and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape in the Framework area;*
- *Improve resilience to the effects of climate change;*
- *Improve the sustainability of communities across the Framework area;*
- *Improve opportunities for enjoyment and understanding of the wildlife, natural beauty and the special qualities of the National Park;*
- *Use green infrastructure to support the delivery of ecosystem services;*
- *Integrate cultural heritage into the GI network;*
- *Improve access opportunities to natural greenspace in the Framework area for all sectors of society;*
- *Identify and prioritise opportunities to enhance and deliver optimum benefits from strategic GI;*
- *Encourage the enhancement and delivery of strategic GI through contributions from new development.*

### **What level of support does the Green Infrastructure Framework have?**

A workshop to discuss the development of a South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework was attended by representatives from 14 of the 15 Local Planning Authorities that straddle the National Park boundary (see Annex A). It was also attended by representatives from Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage (now Historic England). The workshop provided feedback on draft objectives for the Framework and endorsed the appointment of a Technical Working Group

to oversee development of the Framework from among the delegates attending. The members of this group are listed below.

**Technical Working Group Members**

| <b>Name</b>          | <b>Organisation</b>                  |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Natalie Bumpus       | Wealden District Council             |
| Virginia Pullan      | East Sussex County Council           |
| Ellie Henderson      | Woodland trust                       |
| Tim Dyer             | West Sussex County Council           |
| Julie Boschi         | Havant Borough Council               |
| Rebecca Fry          | Brighton and Hove City Council       |
| Charmaine Smith      | Surrey County Council                |
| Ben Daines           | Adur and Worthing Council            |
| Rebecca Pearson      | Natural England                      |
| Jennifer Hollingum   | Mid Sussex District Council          |
| Martin Small         | English Heritage                     |
| Ian Phillips         | SDNPA                                |
| Dave Brookshaw       | Brighton & Hove LAF                  |
| Simon James          | Forestry Commission                  |
| Sebastian Anstruther | SDNPA Member                         |
| Ses Wright           | ARRT Project Officer                 |
| David Hill           | Rural Surveyor, CLA                  |
| Rich Howarth         | Brighton and Hove Biosphere Manager  |
| Tom Ormesher         | NFU                                  |
| Hannah Hyland        | Planning Liaison, Environment Agency |
| Rosie Pyper          | Catchment Coordinator                |

Natural England views this initiative by the South Downs National Park Authority and its neighbouring local planning authorities as a rare opportunity to create a truly multifunctional GI network capable of delivering a broad range of ecosystem services on a landscape scale. For this potential to be realised, however, GI must be considered spatially in an overarching Framework. This must be strategic in nature with the ability to reach beyond the National Park Boundary.

**What area will the Framework cover?**

The proposed area for the Framework will include all of the District Authority partners which have an area within the SDNP. This provides a buffer around the entire National Park enabling cross-boundary issues to be captured. Cross boundary issues in the vicinity of Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA already form the focus for liaison on Habitats Regulations Assessment issues. Waverley BC is therefore being considered in relation cross boundary issues and will be invited to be a party to the Framework. There is clear overlap with The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) Green infrastructure Strategy and Implementation Framework for South Hampshire and SDNPA has been actively contributing to the review of this. Close liaison between The PUSH Green infrastructure Strategy and Implementation Framework and South Downs GI Framework will be appropriate into the future to ensure collaboration on projects that are of mutual benefit. Similarly, the Framework would link to and complement work being undertaken via the Green Infrastructure West Sussex Network and the East Sussex Landscape and Biodiversity Working Group.

**What is the current status of progress with the Framework?**

The draft Aim and Objectives set out above were tabled at a meeting of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on 16 September. The Framework document is being drafted by consultants Blackwood Bayne Ltd. commissioned by the SDNPA. A key element of their task has been to review the strategies and policies of all the partner authorities / organisations alongside other evidence and identify potential strategic GI priorities across the study area. The TWG has reviewed the strategic priorities and the structure and presentation of the draft Framework document on 16 September. Blackwood Bayne Consultants are now preparing a first draft of the document for circulation to TWG members for review in November 2015.

**What commitment is being sought from potential Partners to the Framework?**

The commitment required is to support the principle of joint working at a strategic level for the planning, investment and delivery of green infrastructure. There is no financial commitment being sought above and beyond staff time to support periodic meetings. The Framework will offer opportunities to collaborate on evidence collection in support of the planning function and the potential to partner on major funding bids that support GI delivery across the Framework area. All will be aware of emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plans and devolution bids in various Authorities. The Framework can both inform and enable potential cross-boundary GI projects. Some collaboration already takes place; the Framework aims to improve the range and scope of projects for which collaboration is possible.

**Where to obtain further information?**

Potential partners that have representatives involved in the Technical Working Group for the South Downs GI Framework may wish to discuss the Framework with their nominated TWG member in the first instance. However feedback on any aspect of the Framework is welcome by contacting the Project Manager direct; [Ray.Drabble@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:Ray.Drabble@southdowns.gov.uk); tel: 01730819262; mob: 07785425937.

Annex A to Enclosure I to  
SDNPA Letter entitled 'South  
Downs Green Infrastructure  
Framework' dated 18 Sep 15.

**Attendees at SDNPA hosted Workshop: 'Planning to Deliver Multi-functional Benefits for the SDNP and Beyond' dated 13 October 2014.**

| <b>Organisation</b> | <b>Contact Name</b>     | <b>Position</b>                                   |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---|
| ESCC                | Virginia Pullan         | GI Lead   |
| ESCC                | Kate Cole               | Biodiversity Lead                                 |
| ESCC                | Revai Kinsella          | SUDS Lead   |
| WSCC                | Nicola Woolfenden       | GI Lead   |
| WSCC                | Tim Dyer                | Team Mgr Env & Heritage                           |
| HCC                 | Garry King              | Project Officer (Policy)                          |
| Brighton and Hove   | Rebecca Fry             | Senior Planning Officer                           |
| Test Valley         | Steve Lees              | Hd Planning Policy & Transportation               |
| Winchester          | Susan Croker (neeBragg) | Head of Landscape and Open Spaces                 |
| Wnchester           | Stuart Dunbar-Dempsey   | GI Lead   |
| East Hants          | Bruce Collinson         | W&B Project Lead                                  |
| Havant              | Julie Boshi             | Planning Policy                                   |
| Arun                | Charlotte Hardy         | Planning Policy                                   |
| Adur and Worthing   | Hannah Grove            | Planning Policy                                   |
| Eastbourne          | Simon Hurt              | Parks and Gardens                                 |
| Lewes DC            | Robert King             | Snr Planner & GI Rep                              |
| Mid Sussex          | Jennifer Hollingum      | Ashdown Forest/Habitats/SANG/SAMM                 |
| Wealden             | Natalie Bumpus          | Planning Officer                                  |
| Natural England     | Rebecca Pearson         | SDNPA Planning Lead                               |
| Sussex WT           | Henri Brocklebank       | Strategy Lead – Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre |
| Sussex WT           | Laura Brook             | Conservation Officer                              |
| Environment Agency  | Hannah Hyland           | Planning Liaison                                  |
| ARRT                | Sebastian Anstruther    | Chair, Arun and Rother Rivers Trust               |
| EC WG on GI         | Ian Philips             | Rep of the EC WG on GI                            |
| Forestry Commission | Alison field            | Area Dir.   |
| Forestry Commission | Matthew Woodcock        | Forest Svcs Rep                                   |
| Forestry Commission | Simon James             | Area Mgr  |
| Woodland Trust      | Ellie Henderson         | Regional and Local Govt Officer                   |
| National Trust      | Jane Cecil              |   |
| SD LAF              | David Brookshaw         | B&H LAF   |
| English Heritage    | Martin Small            | EH Planning Liaison                               |
| SD LAF              | Glynn Hugh Jones        | S. Downs Society                                  |
| Thurrock Council    | Allison Campbell        | Landscape Strategy Mgr                            |